

City Style: Fashion Masochist: Liquid Detox

The authors of the new Martha's Vineyard Diet Detox book promise “purification of body and soul” and dramatic weight loss by the glass. Rachel Baker takes the plunge.

By Rachel Baker

The Pitch: Developed at her Vineyard Haven holistic retreat, Roni DeLuz's drinkable diet aims to rid the body of toxins that can result in bloating, bad skin, and fatigue. (Dropping pounds is just a bonus.)

The Experience: DeLuz has been preaching her regimen to high-profile clients like publishing queen Judith Regan since 1997. Her new book, *21 Pounds in 21 Days: The Martha's Vineyard Diet Detox*, takes readers through three weeks of liquid nutrition, and includes recipes for “delectable” puréed juice and soups made of green vegetables like kale and broccoli. For those who don't cook—or own a blender—DeLuz offers a \$200 kit containing tubs of powdered veggie mix, protein shake mix, and “Inner Cleanse” herbal tablets. I opt for the prepackaged stuff. “Congratulations!” says Dr. Roni (as her clients call her). “Your body is going to love you!”

A usual day calls for four “green drinks,” which taste like watered-down popsicles. For the first few days I feel peaked, but determined. Talking about it helps. My grandfather, a Mississippi egg farmer who subsists on a sturdy diet of fried cheese and cigars, thinks it's a great idea, and likens my detox to molting, the process by which hens are deprived of food to improve their egg output. Never mind that they lose their feathers in the bargain.

By day four, I'm nauseated and hungry. I barely make it out of bed, except to vomit. Dr. Roni says the vomiting isn't typical, and adds that I must be “highly toxic.” “Your body is just going to love you after you get those toxins out!” she repeats cheerily, then allows me a bottle of fruit juice (I have two) as well as one mashed-up banana (I eat four). She forbids me to chew: “Chewing would rev up your resting organs,” which apparently is bad. The book, for its part, tells dieters experiencing a “healing crisis” to sip water or have a protein shake. Meanwhile, I've lost a measly 2 pounds.

But the next morning—day five—I wake up feeling clearheaded and enthusiastic. Suddenly, it's as if I could detox forever. But do I want to? I spend the weekend couched, and by Sunday I've lost 5 pounds. I'm also missing my less healthy, more

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The Verdict: By day eight, I'm ready to ease back onto solid food and into society. I'll try again the next time I've got 21 days to idle away on a Vineyard Haven beach. Until then, I've got some chewing to do.